RESTORATION REVIEW

I daily live in the consoling, transporting hope of ere long being united to all the beloved ones, and of beholding my Advocate and divine Redeemer in the land of light and glory. I cannot therefore be sad amidst my trials and bereavements, feeling as I do that the Omnipotent arm sustains and upholds me.—*Selina Campbell*

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Volume 11, No. 10 **December, 1969**

Volume 11, No. 10 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **December 1969**

A Spiritual Call For Renewal. . .

A SAMPLE OF OUR BEST

Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for they contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all the living that she had.—Luke 21:34

Oliver Wendell Holmes, son of the poet of the same name, served both as chief justice of Massachusetts Supreme Court and associate justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. When his fellow jurists were honoring him at a dinner, he took the occasion to reflect upon half lifetime as a judge. He referred to the docket that he kept as a kind of judicial diary of all his cases, a thousand of them in all, and concluded that many of them were trifling and transitory in nature. Then he said:

"Alas, gentlemen, that is life. We cannot live our dreams. We are lucky enough if we can give a sample of our best, and if in our hearts we can feel that is has been nobly done."

There is something about that story that leaves one with a sense of frustration. If one attains the eminence of a supreme court jurist and still finds much of what he does only trifling, then what hope is there for us lesser lights for finding life significant. And yet the judge gives the believer an important truth to ponder. *We cannot live our dreams. We do well when we can give life a sample of our best.*

So it is with this little journal we send forth. Once I may have had dreams of an important publication, meaning I suppose a large circulation and a great influence. I don't recall such visions, but they would have been natural. Even when such dreams are realized there is a question as to how much good is really accomplished, Oliver Wendell Holmes himself being judge. I have long since resigned myself to the quiet hope of doing some little good in this world. The Master's words provide that hope: "He who is righteous in a little is righteous also in much." As Namaan learned from a maiden so God's little people have taught me not to think in terms of great accomplishments, but to look to God in the hope that He will use me in some humble way to realize His purposes in this world.

I think of David's desire: "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." And David had been around enough to know of the pleasures of "the tents of wickedness." A *doorkeeper,* only a *doorkeeper.* And in his time David had tasted the power of a conquering king.

Then there is that woman who anointed Jesus with costly ointment. While others criticized her for the waste, the Lord said, "She has done a beautiful thing to me." How many there might be who now listen to the angels sing, who in this world were either ignored or criticized. What is inconsequential to man may be viewed as beautiful to God.

Jesus said of this woman: “She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burying.” It is not likely that she realized that her act had such significance as preparing the body of God’s Messiah for burial. She was simply doing what she could with what she had. It was a sample of her best, and God used it to His glory.

A similar incident is when Jesus and his disciples were to eat the Passover together, and his disciples pointed out that there was no place to do it. It must have been prearranged by the Lord, for he instructed them to go into the city where they would see a *man* carrying a jar of water, something the women always did, and follow him into the house he enters. There they were to tell the householder, “The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I am to eat the passover with my disciples?” Then they would be shown a large upper room appropriately furnished for the occasion.

The story goes to the very heart of what it means to believe in Jesus. The man gave the best he had to the One in whom he placed his trust, and yet that person was a hunted criminal in the eyes of the authorities. He was risking his own life in order for Jesus to have a party.

That old Dutchman, William the Silent, who was assassinated even though he never said much, epitomized his life with a statement that points up what we are saying: “It is not necessary to hope in order to act, or to succeed in order to persevere.”

Ah, what wisdom is in those words!

As in the case of the man who arranged for the Lord’s secret party in his upper room, he did not stop to ask if he might get caught while harboring a criminal. In faith one acts even when there is no assurance that all will turn out well. And if our religion is valid it teaches us to persevere even in the face of apparent failure.

It must be so with us who labor as peacemakers to bring new dimensions of fellowship and brotherhood to a fractured people. Success? Despite all the happy signs even now, it may well be that the success in our generation will be very limited. Still we must persevere. It demands a sample of our best.

The story of the poor widow is especially to the point. Her gifts to the temple treasury were totally insignificant, being worth far less than one cent of our money. She too was insignificant, and it is likely that her presence was as much ignored as her gift, especially in the presence of the rich, who were also making their gifts. But Jesus noticed her, and it is noteworthy that He discerned that she was a widow. And what a declaration he made of her gift! “She has put in more than all of them,” He said. Jesus said that about a gift worth less than a penny!

It is an important lesson in values, for it shows that the *real* is on the inside, in the heart, and works its way out. The Lord makes it clear while her gift counted more (to *Him* that is) than the gifts of the rich. “They all contributed out of their abundance, but she out

of her poverty put in all the living that she had." He knew nor only that she was a widow but that she had also given all that she had.

The big difference between the widow and the rich in what they gave is that to the widow it was something important, while to the rich it was something to be done as a matter of course. And that is the big difference today between the real believer and the nominal church member. To one Jesus is significant and important. He means everything. But to the other He is nothing to get excited about. Religion may be all right in its place, but there is no sense in becoming very involved.

The reason so many of us give no more than we do, pray no more than we do, and work no harder than we do is that we do not see these things as particularly important. We are ready to give our best to that which has won our mind and heart.

Renewal comes through recovery, and recovery through renewal. That has been our theme this year. It will help us to move in this direction if we can learn to go beyond our dreams and to accept conditions as we find them, and then look to God for those opportunities in which we can give at least a sample of our best in building a better world and a more spiritual brotherhood.

The widow in the temple, the woman who anointed Jesus, the man who prepared the upper room, all these had the common trait of being insignificant and unimportant people, and yet God used them to the glory of the Messiah. He has a way of making foolish the wisdom of the wise, and of making rich the poverty of the poor. With Justice Holmes we may agree that much of life seems trifling and unimportant, but those of us who trust in Jesus will give ourselves to be used of God even in inconsequential ways. What appears trifling to the world may be momentous to God.

A sample of one's best may be but a farthing, a flash of ointment, or an upper room made ready. But it should be of great comfort to us that our Lord spoke of such humble gifts with superlatives. "She has given more than them all," and "She has done something beautiful for me," was his language.

What a blessed anticipation it is that our blessed Lord will one day say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys prepared for you from the foundation of the world." That will be our glory!

He who will say that is the One who sees as important what others see as unimportant. Jesus is sensitive even to a farthing, a word, a touch, a cup of water, a broken heart.

He is ready to receive a sample of the best we have.—*the Editor*

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.—*Edmund Burke*

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Alexander Campbell's "Synopsis of Reform"

THE RECOVERY OF FAMILY RELIGION

Perhaps it was because they had more time for it, but more probably it was because they had more *will* for it; but whatever the reason our pioneers put most of us to shame in making the home the center of piety and devotion. It was at the family altar that the children learned the great stories of the Bible. With the father leading in the devotionals, the entire family, along with servants and guests, would sing praises together, read the scriptures and discuss them, and listen to the children recite memory verses. In the absence of the father the mother would not neglect the family altar.

Robert Burns, the Scottish bard, describes such scenes in his *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, where he pictures the lowly farmer making his way home to his modest cottage after a hard day's work. After "the supper crowns their simple board," the family gathers in a circle to listen as "The priestlike father reads the sacred page." It is a touching scene where Burns sees the father:

Then kneeling down, to heaven's eternal King
The saint, the father, and the husband prays;
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;

While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Burns believed that "poor Religion's pride, in all the pomp of method and of art," his description of the institutional church with its "pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole" could not compare with the simple and genuine religion of the humble home.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad;
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,

An honest man's the noblest work of God.

These were the values Alexander Campbell was seeking to recover when he included "Personal and Family Reformation" as a chapter in his *Synopsis of Reform*.

As personal intelligence, purity, and happiness is the end of all public and private, theoretic or practical reformation, the present standard of personal knowledge, faith, piety, and morality being too low, must be greatly elevated.

Campbell believed that "the abundant life" that Jesus came to bring implied intelligence, purity, and happiness. The mission of religion is to make men *whole. Holiness* and *wholeness* are closely related, and it is the happy, full life that is the abundant life. And all this implies intelligence. Campbell believed that man is morally obligated to improve his mind as well as his heart. This is what he means by Christian culture, and the lack of it in his time was disturbing to his reforming mind.

"The church is filled with an ignorant, faithless, carnal, and immoral class of professors," he wrote, "the natural result of the operation of text-preaching, sermonizing, and. speculating upon points of doctrine and sound notions." He lamented the fact that the scriptures are not studied, conversed upon, and laid up in the heart even by those who profess Christ. So whatever may be said for the need of restoring institutions, such as the Lord's supper and immersion, he saw a restoration of piety and devotion to the private lives of saints as second to nothing in importance.

Family education and domestic religion must be, I need not say, greatly advanced, but begun.

He complained that "We have nominal Christian parents with almost Pagan families in all churches in the land. We mean that there are many professed Christian parents who almost wholly neglect their families, and suffer them to grow up without religious and moral culture."

It grieved Campbell that many parents take pains to rear their children for the best circles on earth, but do so little to prepare them for heavenly associations. So he insisted: "We want, and must have, a radical and thorough reformation in family religion and family education." He called for more reading in God's Book, more meditating upon it, more conversation about it, more praying, more singing, more fasting, more rejoicing, more zeal, more morality.

It is to his credit that he did not neglect the altar in his own home, despite his busy life. W. K. Pendleton, who succeeded Campbell as president of Bethany College and who was twice his son-in-law, wrote a memorial to his fruitful life. In the essay he spoke of Campbell's home life:

> He was the most persistent man in the religious instruction of his family that I ever knew. Morning and evening worship were as regular as the daily meals. Never in any family were the Scriptures more copiously recited by the children or elaborately

> explained by the parent. No matter what had been the fatigue and labors of the day, he always found strength and time enough for this cardinal feature in his household economy. He had but little confidence in a piety that was not nourished and instructed by the daily study of the Word of God, and a perpetual habit of prayer. So he taught and thus he practiced. How did it fit him to die? (*Mill. Harb*., 1866, p. 136)

In her *Home Life and Reminiscences of Alexander Campbell,* Selina Campbell, his wife, writes of his concern for the spiritual welfare of his family. She tells how the family was gathered into a little congregation of believers each morning and evening. Nothing was allowed to interfere with this "sublime privilege." Sometimes they took turns in reading verses, sometimes in reciting them from memory. Hymns were also recited. Servants and slaves were made a part of the family congregation. They would all sing and pray together, and Mr. Campbell would expound upon some portion of scripture.

A deeper insight into the family's devotion is found in her story of young Wycliffe's death, the promising son of Campbell who drowned while his father was on his famous trip to England, Ireland, and Scotland in 1847. So devoted was 11-year old Wycliffe that he carried his Bible with him when he worked in the field, memorizing large portions of it, repeating to himself at night what he had learned during the day. While his father was in Europe he resolved to commit to memory the *Gospel of John,* and had completed the first five chapters when his mother suggested he memorize the *Proverbs*, fourteen chapters of which he had mastered at the time of his death, which was four months after his father had left home.

Mrs. Campbell tells how Wycliffe would recite to his grandfather, Thomas Campbell, each evening at the family devotionals what he had learned during the day. She also tells of the hymns he would recite, fifteen in all he had learned that summer. She remembers with tenderness the hymn he recited the evening before his death, which began with:

Father of Mercies in thy Word,
What endless glory shines!
Forever be thy name adored,
For these celestial lines!

The mother also fondly recalled how Wycliffe was enamored of some colored pictures that were brought into Bethany, most of them depicting generals and battle scenes, being as it was the time of the Mexican War. But it was a picture, not of a great general, but of a little boy praying with lifted hands that caught Wycliffe's eye. "He had been taught by father and mother," she explains, "that the religion of Jesus was a religion of love and goodwill to man, and not of war and hate."

It wrings one's heart to read of how Selina Campbell stood beside Buffalo creek, waiting for her son to be removed from the apron of the mill dam where in his confusion he was trapped while swimming. It was at the very spot where many had been immersed into Christ, the place where her husband had many times sounded forth the gospel to those gathered along the beautiful green banks. But now her son was dying in those same waters. She tells how Dr. Robert Richardson came with bellows to inflate his lungs, and how salt water was applied to his sides until blisters appeared. It was only when the good doctor gave up hope of reclaiming him that she burst into tears.

It was a traumatic experience for the Campbells. Mrs. Campbell was disconsolate for years, and W. K. Pendleton observed that Mr. Campbell was never the same after the tragedy. Something like what theologians call the *numinous* seemed to have played on their minds. Mrs. Campbell in after-years had a vision of Wycliffe appearing before her, now a grown man. She asked him how he had drowned, but he tenderly silenced her, as if there was a mystery about it that she could not know. And Mr. Campbell, still in Scotland, even on the day of the tragedy, had disturbing thoughts that something sad had happened back home, and said as much at the breakfast table the next morning.

They both struggled for an answer for their tragic loss. She concluded that God took Wycliffe in His providential care, to spare him of some impending evil that would have marred the beauty of his young life. Alexander wrote at length in the *Millennial Harbinger* on "The Mystery of Providence" in which he lays bare his grieved soul, and concludes that Wycliffe was taken of God to serve in some other part of the universe.

After confronting the deep mystery as to why some old sinner of vigorous health is allowed to live and blaspheme God for a half a century, while "many a pure and excellent stripling is Cut down as the green and tender herb in the very morning of his existence," he concludes that God does not take such noble youth because He does not want them to bless humanity by their labors. Why then does he take them?

"What then remains but that there are other provinces in God's immense universe in which they could be employed more happily and more usefully than here?"

We have dwelt on the Wycliffe story at some length because it so nobly illustrates the loveliness of the Christian home. The Bethany home represented the kind of environment that Campbell envisaged for all saints of God.

Are there not far too few Wycliffes in our time? Granted that he had several generations of piety before him, and that the likes of such a young man cannot be expected of many, do our homes provide the climate where such souls might be cultivated? Religion was important to him, *very* important, because it was to his parents and grandparents. We give importance to excellence in scholarship, athletics, science, business and many other things, while little significance is attached to achievement in moral and spiritual graces. In

many, many homes of professed Christians, the likes of a Wycliffe Campbell are motivated to give their superior talents to pursuits that draw the applause of the world.

In 1840 Campbell resolved to present practical lessons on how to make each Christian home a *Bethel,* meaning "house of God," and so he began a series of articles on how to conduct instruction classes for the family. "All Christian dwellings should be *Bethels*—houses consecrated to God, in which his word should be read, his praises sung, and his name invoked on all the days of the year," he wrote in introducing the series that he chose to call "Conversations at the Carlton House," The series began with a new year, and he proposed that it was a good time to resolve "to erect an altar in every Christian family, upon which we shall constantly offer our morning and evening sacrifices to the Lord." He stated his conviction that seems especially appropriate to our own time: "No person who has long lived in a Bethel can ever after relish the tabernacles of ungodly men."

It is not clear as to the identity of "Carlton House," though he associates it with a home he frequently visited in his travels. But it is likely that it is drawn from his own home life as much as from any other. Olympas and his wife Julia have nine children, natural and adopted, and six servants in "Carlton House," which fell into three classes: those under 1, those between 7 and 14, and those beyond 14. Olympas was a non-class brother (!) in that all three classes sat in the same family circle. The father would assign the easier lessons to the younger set and the more difficult ones to the older groups. The circle gathered for an hour each morning and evening. One or two chapters of the Bible would be read each time, with the first class reciting the simple facts of the narrative, the second class explaining them, and the senior group drawing inferences and making practical applications.

For the next three years Campbell graced his *Millennial Harbinger* with "Conversations at the Carlton House," in which he gave a running account of the discussions between Olympas and his household. The series runs through 31 installments, covering some 200 pages of rather fine print. In terms of modern publication it would make a sizable book. One only needs to read the material to realize what a glorious experience it would be for anyone to be able to sit within the Carlton family circle. This was Campbell's point: to encourage others to do in their home something like what Olympas and Julia did in theirs.

Olympas began his children with the first chapter of the Bible and takes them through much of Genesis, and then to Luke for several sessions. Many interesting points come up in the conversations, such as how Isaac is a type of Christ, why angels have names, whether Zecharias was deaf as well as dumb, the causes of the flood, how Noah's three sons populated the world.

It went like this:

Olympas. The Lord tempted Abraham; yet, saith James, "God tempteth no man to evil." How then, Thomas, did God tempt Abraham?

Thomas. He tempted him by trying him—by trying how far he would obey God.

Olympas. God uses strong arguments, and therefore strong temptations. To what points in Abraham's character was the temptation addressed?

Reuben. To his parental affection. Abraham loved Isaac, and he loved God; and God seems to have designed to test which of the two he loved most.

Olympas. True; Abraham had great parental affection for Isaac and much filial affection for God. Now the question was, Which of the two were the stronger—his parental or his filial affection? But was there nothing more in it than this, William?

To those of us who make the excuse that we cannot seem to find time to educate our children in the Lord, Campbell, who in his own busy life found time, says: "Astonishing! For what, then, was time given! You have nothing so deserving of time as this matter." He likened such an attitude to the woman who says she has no time to snatch her child from the fire, for she is busy attaching ornaments to her person.

And yet it was on *training* rather than teaching that Campbell placed the emphasis. "Training sons is much more laborious," he said, "than teaching sons." You must cause your child to *do* the things you teach him, he observed, like horses in a circus trained by their masters. If you want your son to be generous and benevolent, show him how to do such acts and have him do them. "Take him with you," Campbell advised, "while visiting the miseries and misfortunes of the sick and afflicted." Further he said: "When you are pouring the wine and the oil of your consolation into the wounds and bruises of the lacerated and distressed, let him carry the vessel."

To the contrary, if you want your child to be selfish and unfeeling, then accustom him to hard up and pocket everything he can acquire, and never let him hear you condole with the afflicted nor see a tear of sympathy fall from your eyes.

There were two passages that especially impressed the Campbells in reference to bringing up children. Selina Campbell, when thinking of Wycliffe, would quote Pro. 20:11: "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right." Alexander Campbell, when writing on the education of children, would quote Pro. 22:6; "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

It was this kind of religion and the family altar at Bethany that produced a Wycliffe Campbell. It is a lesson well remembered in our efforts to renew the congregations of Christ in our time.—*the Editor*

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ANOTHER LOYAL CHURCH FOR MY HOMETOWN

Denton has been our home for eight years now, and it is a pleasant little city, lying 35 miles north of Dallas-Ft. Worth. While it is unique in being the home of two state universities, it is rather typical in reference to its representation of congregations of the Restoration Movement. Our Pioneer preachers made their way to Denton a century ago, and while that famous Texas bandit, Sam Bass, was robbing banks and trains in these parts, they were immersing converts and planting churches. So the Christian Church and Churches of Christ have a long and respectable history for this youthful section of our country.

Back in the 1870's our Movement in this part of Texas was united, as it was all the way back to Virginia and Kentucky where it began. But the ugly story of division came to Denton as well as to every other city, so that today we witness to the same factional pattern that is evident everywhere our people are known. The First Christian Church (Disciples) and the Boliver St. Church of Christ are the oldest of our congregations, and their history goes back well into last century. We also have a non-class congregation, a premillennial congregation, a non-cooperative (anti-Herald of Truth) congregation, and two other mainline Churches of Christ.

Now however the premill group should be removed from the list, for their number grew gradually smaller, and they at last sold out to the non-cooperative group. The switch seemed strange: it was still a Church of Christ, same building, and some of the same folk kept coming even after it was under new management. One Sunday it was premill, with all the implications that has, and the next Sunday it was antiHearld of Truth with all the implications that has! One brother, who is premill but still sitting in his same pew as before, was explaining to me how the signing of a contract transformed the place into a different kind of Church of Christ. "They don't believe in orphanages," he had gathered from what he had been hearing!

There is of course more involved than that, but men who struggle all week to make a living had just as soon that their world on Sunday be kept uncomplicated. It is too bad that their Sundays cannot be truly heartwarming, soulgrowing experiences. But many of them learn to their sorrow that the gravest issue in our divided state is to establish and preserve our parties. And that is seldom edifying to the soul.

It is needless to say that these congregations have nothing to do with each other, except for token recognition between the mainliners. Each party is the loyal one, and insofar as it is concerned, it is the only Church of Christ in Denton. It is unfair to include the premills in this, for during their years in Denton they made several overtures toward the others, even to conducting a unity meeting one year. Nor does the First Christian Church practice exclusivism, though like most Disciples they make no special effort to communicate with their fellow heirs of the Restoration Movement.

But within our own Church of Christ ranks the divisions are bitter and deep. One prominent "anti" minister was once with the Boliver Street congregation, at which time he was greatly loved and appreciated. He returned recently to condua meetings for the new "anti" group, and, despite notices in the press of his presence, only two old sisters from the big church he once ministered to came out to hear him. In visiting with him at that time and since it was evident to me that he was a terribly grieved and disturbed man, his life's work shattered by strife. He told me that the death of loved ones in his immediate family had not effected him as the loveless experiences he had been through. He was a sad spectacle to behold, and yet all he had done stemmed from a sincere heart, a burnconviction that he was right and the others wrong.

Another of our ministers here in Denton told me of how he tried to approach another preacher who had branded him and his group as factious. Calling at his home in an effort to be brotherly, he could not get the preacher to answer the doorbell. "He knew it was me," he insisted, with a trace of glee of being able to tell such a damaging tale.

These accounts indicate that I manage to keep lines of communication open with all these groups in Denton. I am the only one in town that I know of who can and does circulate among them all and acknowledge all as my brothers. I consider none only half-brothers. Nor do I think in terms of "full fellowship" or "partial fellowship." I disagree with them all but love them nonetheless. And they can talk with me though not with each other!

After telling all this it would appear unreal to tell of still another *loyal* church coming to my hometown. But there is one prominent wing of our Movement that I did not include in the account above, and I was well aware of their absence in Denton, but now they have moved in and swelled our list of true churches. I refer to the Independent Christian Church.

I first read of the move into Denton in one of the Independent papers, that a certain brother who was evangelizing in Texas was to plant a faithful congregation in Denton. Then I read of it in the local paper and received personal invitations to its opening service, which was to be in the form of a regional rally, with folk coming from far and near. The city auditorium was rented for the grand opening and the state evangelist was to preach. So I was on hand to welcome to my hometown still another loyal church. I was resigned to the fact that one more probaHy wouldn't hurt anything. More importantly they too are my brothers and I wanted to be with them.

But I was disappointed in what I saw and heard that night, and I feel constrained to offer my protest to the Independents that read this journal.

It was undoubtedly the most disgraceful display of sectarian bigotry that I have witnessed in many a day. I was ashamed of them as my brothers and regretted that such a manifestation of self-righteous pharisaism should be associated with the Restoration Movement.

There is consolation in the fact that many Independents are not as sectarian as was the preacher on this occasion, and some of them that I know personally would have objected as much as I did.

By listening to what was said one would suppose that Denton, Texas had all this time been destitute of the gospel, that no gospel ministers reside here, and that we were bereft of both Christians and Christian churches. By replacing some remote village in Afghanistan for "Denton" in what was said, it might have passed as a rahrah speech in behalf of foreign missions. But the speaker made it unmistakably clear that to him Denton was a destitute field in need of evangelization, as much as Macedonia ever was to the apostle Paul.

Despite our factious ways I was hardly prepared for what I heard. *The Lord wants a church in Denton!, the students in this city need a church where they can worship in truth!, we must sacrifice to establish the Lord's cause in Denton!, a city with two universities should not be without a church!* On and on it went. The "Denton Christian Church" became a reality that night, and, from what had been said, one could conclude that at that moment Denton became a part of the history of Christianity.

I listened carefully for it, but there was not the slightest reference to any of the six congregations of the Restoration Movement already in Denton, some of them planted by gospel preachers who had gone on to their reward long before the speaker was born. It was indeed a momentous occasion at municipal auditorium. The gospel had at last reached Denton!

It was a bitter experience listening to all that, but my resentment was eased by memories of my own youthful "zeal without knowledge," and I left the place feeling sorry for all of us, including myself. In fairness to the facts, however, I must add that the speaker that night cannot be excused on the grounds of youth.

But I must say the same thing about myself, if not now then certainly in earlier years. I have pitched tent in many a town with no doubt whatever that my first sermon under the canvass was the first the people had heard of the gospel. And now I wonder if even I on such occasions really proclaimed the gospel or was it an effort to add one more party to those already there? What a miserable job we have done in "uniting the Christians in all the sects," which was the stated purpose of our pioneers.

My complaint is not that the Independents have come to town, for they have as much right here as the rest of us, and it may well be that they can make an important contribution to the Christian cause. But why cannot the coming be more irenic and with an appreciation

of what has already been done for Christ? It ought to be enough for the Independents to believe that they have a significant contribution to make, that they have emphases to bear witness to that may be neglected by existing congregations? Must it all be so earthshaking that both wisdom and the gospel will perish if they do not make their entrance?

It would have been gracious if the speaker could have said: "We are well aware that the gospel was brought to Denton a century ago by our pioneers, and that their work has been carried on through the years, so that now we have some six congregations of our Movement in this city. We rejoice in all the good that these our brethren have done and are doing. We are sorry that the work has to be done in such a divisive state, but this is the case everywhere. Why do we now come, adding one more name to the roster of Restoration churches? We believe we have a witness to make to this city. We believe that our wing of the brotherhood has preserved some of the truths that are being neglected by others. We want to emphasize some things that others are minimizing. We believe God wants us here to do this, within a context of love and cooperation with all our brethren in this city who love and honor the Christ as we do.

In fairness to the Independents it must be admitted that all of our parries carry out their missions in about the same way as they came to Denton. In fact this is the second "loyal" church that I have helped welcome to town since I've been here! But our several wrongs do not add up to a right. We just must stop our devisive ways. Stopping starts in the heart, in the way we feel toward each other. The Christ will help us, if we really want to give up our sectarianism. And that's the question. *Do we really want to give up our party religion?*

In view of what is said here about the attitude on the parr of some Independents, the following statement from an Independent preacher might be especially appropriate.—*the Editor*

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An Open Letter . . .

WHY I'M LEAVING THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

It is hard after 23 years to say goodbye to one whose friendship I have valued so highly, but I have no other choice. Our situation is similar to a married couple that has separated for sometime and, after looking for chances to reconcile, decides that a divorce is the only realistic answer.

We first met when I was only 9, at which time your claims to be the true church made a profound impression on me. It would be an exaggeration to say that I felt like a commoner who has been favored by a visit from the queen. I dutifully obeyed your requirements for membership. My black baptismal robe represented the old life before we met. After becoming a member of your family, the old was put aside and I entered into a new relationship as I came forth from the baptistry.

The years that followed brought us even closer together. I attended more and more of your services. I believed your claim of dating from Pentecost and accepted as fact that you were the true strain in our time of all the billions of Christians who have lived. I recall attending a youth camp that you sponsored, where about 100 high school students worked and played together, exultant in the knowledge that we were a part of the only survivors of God's people upon the earth. The teachers at this camp put to rout all the straw men of other denominations with such ease that we marveled that others could reject what was so clear to us. The doctrines of other churches were false unless they were identical to our own.

It was the influence of this camp that caused me to enter your ministry, for upon returning home I took a part-time job with a view of entering seminary in the fall. I found seminary enjoyable, despite the pressures of work. While many of the professors were of high calibre, they still parroted the party line with few deviations. Sometimes it was a matter of copying the teacher's notes precisely as he gave them, and any question that challenged the official party line was often ignored. As I look back I can see that you must be proud of these men who had become proficient in brainwashing without even realizing it. Bur now I can see that true education teaches one to *think.*

After seminary I went on to further study and degrees, and I served pastorates in Georgia, Florida, and Illinois, as well as Ohio, where I now reside. I labored strenuously with each church, seeking to "convert" (or *proselytize*) those of other churches who were groping their way through denominational vagaries. Many with whom I worked predicted a rosy pathway for my future years, enjoying as I did a measure of success.

God in his wisdom touches our lives in strange ways, moving us from the ruts of complacency and drawing us unto himself. In our case it was the birth of our baby son. For the first time I could see God in an altogether different light, for now I too was a father. I had been preaching a concept of God something like the stern and unyielding Jehovah of the Old Testament. For the first time in my life I really understood the story of the prodigal son. God was no longer a judge on a bench, meticulously listing my every fault, but a father who was teaching me through love rather than through law.

After six years in seminary and three degrees in theology, I was understanding for the first time what Jesus meant in speaking of God as father, as well as what he said about grace and forgiveness. Now I could no longer believe that the church is superior to God and Christ. I had believed that you, the church, were the means of salvation; but now I could see that it is rather the grace of God. O you vain and conceited creature! Now I could see why you would not recognize others as fellow Christians. You have the idea that *the church saves,* and that if one is in the wrong church he will be lost. But now I see that it is Christ who saves and that the labels men wear have as much to do with their salvation as their telephone numbers.

These new insights led me into forbidden behavior, forbidden by the insecurity of your outlook, O Independent Church, and for this you cannot forgive me. I visited different churches and carried on dialogue with ministers of other denominations. This was a new world to me. I found warmth and love not often found within your fold. These excursions into forbidden areas caused me to grow bolder, so I was soon dining at a Catholic seminary, exchanging books with priests, and attending Christmas mass. Moreover I visited *Jewish* synagogues and chatted with rabbis. I invited ministers of other churches to my home for dinner and arranged for them to speak at our services, and I accepted invitations to speak for them. It was all so thrilling I could hardly believe it was true.

But you were jealous of my flirtations. Your possessiveness was extreme and your wrath was intense. Even though the church I served was prospering in both attendance and finances, as well as enjoying an influx of new members, the elders, who in the Independent churches think themselves a combination of Paul and the district attorney, were positive that such a liberal theology of mine could never succeed for long, and that the church would soon become a modern Sodom if my insidious concepts were allowed to go unchecked. So check them they did. There were secret meetings to which I was not invited. Every word I wrote in the bulletin and every word I uttered from the pulpit were carefully examined. It reminded me of the way the Pharisees treated Jesus.

This caused me to resolve to go on and say exactly what I believed, evading no issues and bypassing no touchy subjects. I urged those who opposed me to use both the bulletin and the pulpit to give their side, bur this they refused to do, choosing to work in secret rather than in an open confrontation.

During this time I began to reexamine the scriptures in order to discover my exact place in the church as the minister. As I studied the New Testament for the answer I was astounded that I could find no clear-cut parallel to the modern ministry, The picture presented to me from scripture was that of a man working at a secular job and preaching to *those who had never heard about Jesus Christ.* I did not find one instance of a man being

paid by a congregation to tell them the same story week after week for years. I began to wonder if the *offering* and the *ministry* did not go hand in hand in keeping an anachronistic institution from passing into well-deserved oblivion.

Finally your elders called a meeting to inform me that I was to be replaced, which of course did not surprise me. It was the slander, innuendo, and pressure that were used to achieve this end that surprised me. My crimes, it seems, were that I preached too much on Christian unity and used translations of the Bible other than the King James.

So I was voted out at a congregational meeting, which was by a narrow margin. This is to be regretted, for we could have done much together.

I was often saddened by your frequent failure to show any concern for the pressing problems of our world. Riots, alcoholism, poverty, racial strife, unemployment and immorality are of no real concern to you. Some of your people left the church where I was preaching when Negroes joined. On another occasion in a business meeting I pled for $20.00 a month for a poor family, only to be told that it was the family's own fault that they were in need. One church I served had an annual budget of $30,000.00, of which $100.00 went to the poor!

And so we have parted. I have since joined the human race, and it seems that I have been accepted. Your faithful ones made no efforts to reclaim me. Not a single word has come from the hundreds that I worked with, not even from the many preachers I knew. The world has been kinder. Catholics and Protestants alike have offered to help me, some offering me pulpits in their denomination. A Catholic university offered me a job until I could find a regular position. A rural Disciples of Christ congregation invited me to preach for them on weekends, which I accepted, and where I stilI remain.

I plan to give my life to teaching and counselling. Last year I worked with a Catholic elementary school, and this year it is with a Catholic high school for girls. I have found more real Christianity with these people than in the entire eight years that I served as minister for you. I have felt the warmth of God's love and grace, and I have come to accept all Christians as my brothers. Never could I go back to your distorted world. It would be like going back to the first grade and starting all over again. Never again could I stand in your pulpit and parrot the party line.

But you taught me an important lesson, and that is what can happen to an institution when its energies are turned inward to the neglect of the world around.

My desire is to take the love of Christ to the classroom and counseling office. And I hope God may speed the day when your people will discover what I have discovered.

The question is whether you can really change so as to make the “of Christ” or “Christian” in your official title of “Church of Christ-Christian Church” true? I pray that God will guide you to that end, and soon.

Your “liberal” ex-minister,
Gene A. Grant

(6139 Fairway Dr., Cincinnati 45212)

“Every man is, in some respects,
like every other man;
like some other men;
like no other man.”—*Clyde Kluckhohn*

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READERS' EXCHANGE

Labors of Love

I am now happily busy in an exciting ministry at this Congregational Church. I have written no “swan song” to the Churches of Christ, nor do I want any kind of publicity about moving to another fellowship. As far as I’m concerned, I’ve simply accepted a call to another congregation to continue my Christian ministry.—*one of our ministers*

Here in Appalachia we have had both blessings and disappointments. It is a chronically depressed area economically. We have more extremes here, socially and economically, than one will find in most parts of the country. Church work here is very difficult. While the early Restoration flourished in the Blue Grass section northwest of here, we somehow lost our hold in the mountains along the Kentucky-Virginia line. Baptists and Holiness sects are strong. A surprisingly large percentage profess no church affiliation of any kind. What few Restoration heritage congregations that are here are of Christian Church connections.—*Kentucky*

Yesterday I spoke at Rockview Prison. This is my fifth or sixth time with them. The chaplain made some favorable remarks after my message. Evidently many of the inmates were wanting me back. I am due there again on the third Sunday in January.—*Pennsylvania*

I am busier than I have ever been in my life and happier with it. What a genuine thrill to be in the Family. I am constantly amazed at the grace of God which caused Him to stoop in order to lift.—*Missouri*

A prayer group in this area recently went on a mountain retreat, and I have never experienced such a period of spiritual refreshment and worship as we experienced that weekend. The only thing we feel discouraged about is "How could we go back to the ritualistic, dry, formal worship in our usual way?" I do thank our Lord for having found this period of refreshment.—*California*

Oh, the wondrous grace and glory of God! I've been led into conducting and assisting with prayer, praise and Bible study group at Catholic University of America! These are sweet-spirited people and they are hungering and thirsting. Priests, nuns, brothers, professors and students—every Friday night on campus—40 to 60 each time. Praise God! —*Virginia*

Loving Rebuke

I am enjoying *Restoration Review* very much, but I feel someone should be willing to spank some others—in *love*. I have waited for someone else to do this, but it apparently has not been done. So here is the spanking I have to administer.

If all those who spend so much time, energy and hot air would only spend half as much time uplifting the person of Jesus and glorifying his name rather than issues and problems and even the church, there would soon be no factions or issues to debate over. I am afraid we stand convicted by 1 Cor. 3:3: "For you are still unspiritual, having the nature of the flesh, under the control of ordinary impulses. For as long as there are envying and jealousy and wrangling and factions among you, are you not unspiritual and of the flesh, behaving yourselves after a human standard and like mere unchanged men?"—*Texas*

They Have Hope

Your paper has helped me over some very rough times in the church.—*Ohio*

Through your efforts and those of Carl Ketcherside and Bob Meyers, and a growing number of other concerned individuals, I have some hope yet for the Church of Christ.—*Kansas*

Keep up the good work. I know God is blessing you. I believe you are working in one of the most difficult mission fields. Too many of us in the "Church of Christ" are depending on a so-called superior doctrinal understanding and in our own abilities and good works instead of a complete reliance and trust in Jesus our Lord. He alone is worthy and faithful, and our only righteousness is that which is given us when we trust in Him.—*Atlanta*

Your publication is a help to free thinkers who want nothing more than to show *love* toward all of God's creation.—*Nashville*

The church is the only organization we have through which to take the Word of God to the world, so let us be thankful for it . . . Years ago I asked you a question in Detroit, Ill., as to why the church is not accomplishing more. Your answer: the congregation is of this world and made up of human beings who are not perfect, so we have to take what we have to work with and do the best we can. We know that God will not let His church fail.—*Florida*

They (two ministers, Church of Christ and Christian Church) are going to begin a prayer session and discussion for purposes of better understanding each other, and for perhaps laying groundwork for positive action toward unity. They have invited all who want to join them.—*Oregon*

Letters from all over the country indicate a growing hope for our brotherhood's future. This is no time to leave. You were never needed more than now.

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BOOK NOTES

Coming in 1970

1970 will bring us the twelfth volume of *Restoration Review,* but it will be the eighteenth year of our journalistic efforts, since this journal bore another name for the first six years. It will be only the fifth year that we have announced a specific theme and issued the journal in the form of a book at the end of the year. Some of our readers order the book form of the journal as well as the monthly issues, for it serves well as a permanent record of our efforts. This leaves them free to pass their monthly issues along to their friends.

The theme for 1970 will be *The New Creation,* which will be an interpretation of "Behold, I make all things new." We plan to study what it means to be a new creature in a new institution. Paul assures us that "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." The character of this new state shall be part of our concern.

The Lord willing, this shall carry us through ten issues and 200 pages, at the end of which we shall publish a hard cover volume entitled *T he New Creation,* with introduction and table of contents.

It is not too late to join those who are collecting the bound volumes. Each of these may be ordered for 3.00: *Things That Matter Most* (1966), *Resources of Power* (1967), *The Quest of God* (1968), and *Renewal through Recovery* (1969). The last volume will be ready in a few weeks.

Making Ethical Decisions by Howard Clark Kee continues to be a popular seller. The chapter on "But Who Wants to be Good?" is especially provocative. It is only 1.00.

Those who wish to have in their library the bound volumes of *Mission Messenger,* edited by Carl Ketcherside, have the advantage of being able to purchase several of them at one time, and pay for them on our Credit Plan of only 5.00 a month, with no additional charge. They are 3.00 each, and we can send *Covenants of God* (1959-60), *Deep Roots* (1966), *Apples of Gold* (1967) and *God's Community* (1968).

We still have a few copies of the controversial *Voices of Concern,* edited by Robert Meyers, which is a collection of essays of critical studies in Church of Christism. 3.50

For 2.50 we can send you Elton Trueblood's *The Common Ventures of Life.* It gives a Christian view of marriage, birth, work, and death. And for the same price you may receive *Alternative to Futility,* also by Trueblood, which is an answer to modern man's spiritual sickness. The alternative to futility is the redemptive fellowship, which he identifies as the "beloved community" at work for God, a creative society in miniature. It is especially appropriate for people who have become imprisoned in congregationalism. For 3.00 we can send *The Life We Prize,* which we believe is Trueblood's best book. Here he discusses the demand for meaning, responsibility, freedom, respect for persons, integrity, etc. It is a very edifying volume. You can purchase all three of these at a saving. 7.00

You may buy all 17 volumes of Barclay's *Daily Study Bible,* covering all of the New Testament, and beautifully bound in hardcover for only 47.50. Using our Credit Plan this is only 5.00 a month. This set is highly recommended as a most informative and enlightening treatment.

Some New Books

Studies in Proverbs by Herman Wilson is the latest in the "Living Word Series" published by Sweet Co. in Austin. Herman Wilson is an English professor at Pepperdine College, and he has done well in drawing rich treasures from a well-known but neglected book of the Old Testament. The chapters on The Inner Man, Glimpses of God, Man and his Money, Adultery, Humor, and the Ideal Wife and Mother will convince the reader that *Proverbs* is as modern and relevant as hamburgers and newspapers. 1.00

For the Freedom: the Biography of John Nelson Armstrong by L. C. Sears is an important piece of work in that it tells of the ordeal of a man who sought to be free and at the same time a leader within the Church of Christ college movement. It is a book that deserves an extensive review. We can only say here that it is an unusual biography because Armstrong was an unusual man. His association with James A. Harding and David Lipscomb adds value to the book. It is also significant in that it gives much information about the development of our colleges. It may not settle the question as to whether we should have ever gone into the college business, but it will certainly underscore the trauma of it all. One thing sure: J. N. Armstrong emerges from it all a prince among men. Those of us who missed knowing him can be grateful for this well-written biography by an English professor at Harding College, whose first president was J. N. Armstrong. It is a handsome, substantial book, and the price of 5.95 is not too much.

The Quiet Revolution by James D. Smart is a study of the radical impact of Jesus on men in his time. It argues that Jesus was a revolutionary with a disturbing mission and a radical message, but all of which led to a *quiet* revolution. The author sees Jesus as one who caused men to question their present existence and who shattered their complacency about the religious and social order. His mission was to break open the frozen patterns of men's lives and set them moving toward a very different future. This book is especially appropriate in our own revolutionary age, for it shows the power of a *quiet* revolution that all Christians should support. 2.95 in paperback.

Bible and Gospel by Archibald M. Hunter, who is professor of New Testament at Aberdeen in Scotland, is a kind of introduction to the Bible, along with a study of Jesus and the Gospels, including his evaluation of Bultmann's demythologization of the New Testament. It is a highly readable and informative volume, pointing up what more of us need to hear: what the Bible should mean to us. 2.25 in paperback.

The Jerusalem Bible may be what you are looking for, for it is rich in explanatory notes at the bottom of the pages all the way through the scriptures, including the Apocrypha, based upon latest scholarship. And the introductions to each book are superb. Too, the whole Bible is placed in outline form, with proper headings, making it easy for you to follow the thought. The inclusion of the Apocrypha adds to the book's value, for these are books every Christian should study for their historical value. The price of this one-volume

library, beautifully bound in buckram, has recently gone up, but we have them at the old price of 16.95. And we'll let you pay for it at 5.00 a month with no carrying charges.

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